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Message Text

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72
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /151 W
---------- 042032
R 201600Z NOV 73
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1939
INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
JEC PARIS 8494

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12836

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINS IT VT VN VS
SUBJECT: NORTH VIETNAMESE PRIESTS VISIT ITALY

1. VATICAN DESK OFFICER FOR VIETNAM INFORMED US NOV 20 THAT FOUR NORTH VIETNAMESE PRIESTS HAD ATTENDED CONFERENCE OF "CHRISTIANS UNITED FOR PEACE IN VIETNAM" HELD IN TURIN NOV 1-4. CONFERENCE WAS HOSTED BY PAX CHRISTI, WHOSE ITALIAN CHAPTER PRESIDENT, CARDINAL PELLEGRINO OF TURIN, OPENED CONFERENCE.

2. NORTH VIETNAMESE PRIESTS, ONE OF WHOM CLAIMED TO COME FROM VIETCONG LIBERATED TERRITORY WITHIN SOUTH VIETNAM, VISITED ROME FOR A FEW DAYS FOLLOWING CONFERENCE. PRIEST FROM VIETCONG-HELD TIERRITORY ATTENDED ONE OF POPE'S MASSIVE GENERAL AUDIENCES, FOLLOWING WHICH ROME CHAPTER OF COMMITTEE TO LIBERATE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SOUTH VIETNAM ISSUED STATEMENT CLAIMING THAT POPE HAD MET WITH THIS PRIEST TO DISCUSS SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM. STATEMENT ALLEGED THAT POPE HAD ALSO GIVEN HIS ENCOURAGEMENT TO CATHOLIC CLERGY WORKING IN VIETCONG OCCUPIED AREAS. SOURCE SAID THIS STATEMENT ENTIRELY BASELESS. POPE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THIS PRIEST OTHER THAN TO PASS BY HIM ON HIS WAY INTO GENERAL AUDIENCE. SOURCE ASSURED US THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE PRIESTS HAD NO CONTACT WITH VATICAN OFFICIALS EXCEPT BRIEF MEETING BETWEEN PRIEST FROM VIETCONG AREA AND LOW-LEVEL FUNCTION-
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ARY OF PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, AN ORGANIZA-

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TION WHOSE DOORS ARE TRADITIONALLY OPEN TO ALL CALLERS.

3. SOURCE EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT ITALIAN NON-LEFTIST PRESS, TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, HAD SEEN TURIN MEETING FOR WHAT IT WAS AND GIVEN IT NO ATTENTION. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 20 NOV 1973
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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30 JUN 2005

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